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TULARE COUNTY.

By GEO. A. BARRY.

TULARE COUNTY, even in the distractions following '49, in the midst of a country noted for its gold, in the very path of the argonauts who came to the divine California as to an El Dorado, was chosen by its first settlers for the promise of its soil. Today that fertility, then so clearly the herald of its true greatness, is coming forcibly to the attention of the world. It is not that Tulare County lacks the unmatched beauties of scenery and climate to be found everywhere within the boundaries of the State, nor yet the deposits of gold that made California so long the synonym for mining rather than for farming. The highest mountains, the deepest cañons, the largest trees and the finest trout streams in the nation are in the Sierra Nevadas, the façades of whose western peaks line through the geographical center of the county from north to south, and from the same mountains gold and magnesite are taken in large quantities, while rich deposits of lead, silver and copper are known to be there.

PUMPING WATER BY CONDENSED AIR.
(Near Tulare.)

It is the richness of the soil, however, that attracts the attention of the fruit-grower and of the old-fashioned farmer to Tulare County. The San Joaquin Valley is a part of the great central plateau of California, which is formed by four chains of mountains of which the Sierra Nevada are the eastern, and it is drained by the San Joaquin river and its tributaries. At the head of this valley and on its eastern limb, yet stretching over into the mountains, lies Tulare County. It is midway between the two chief cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles.. It is a territory across which a railroad train would require six hours to travel, for it is as large as the State of Massachusetts. Nearly two-thirds of it is mountainous, but the remaining third, lying almost under the shadow of those peaks, from which the snow never departs and bathed in a sunshine which is eternal, is a paradise as "fair as a Garden of the Lord," and that is a simile to be taken literally, for it is not the hand of man that has made this county a place of plenty and of beauty.

It is one of the anomalies of human nature that Tulare County is no more cultivated and no more populated than it is, just as it seems to be an anomaly that it should be perfect in natural resources, a place where man does not find the elements in league against him but combined to help him. It is as though nature had played the practical trick that one is recorded to have successfully tried when he went about the streets of a great city for a whole day carrying a hatful of golden eagles and offering them to who-

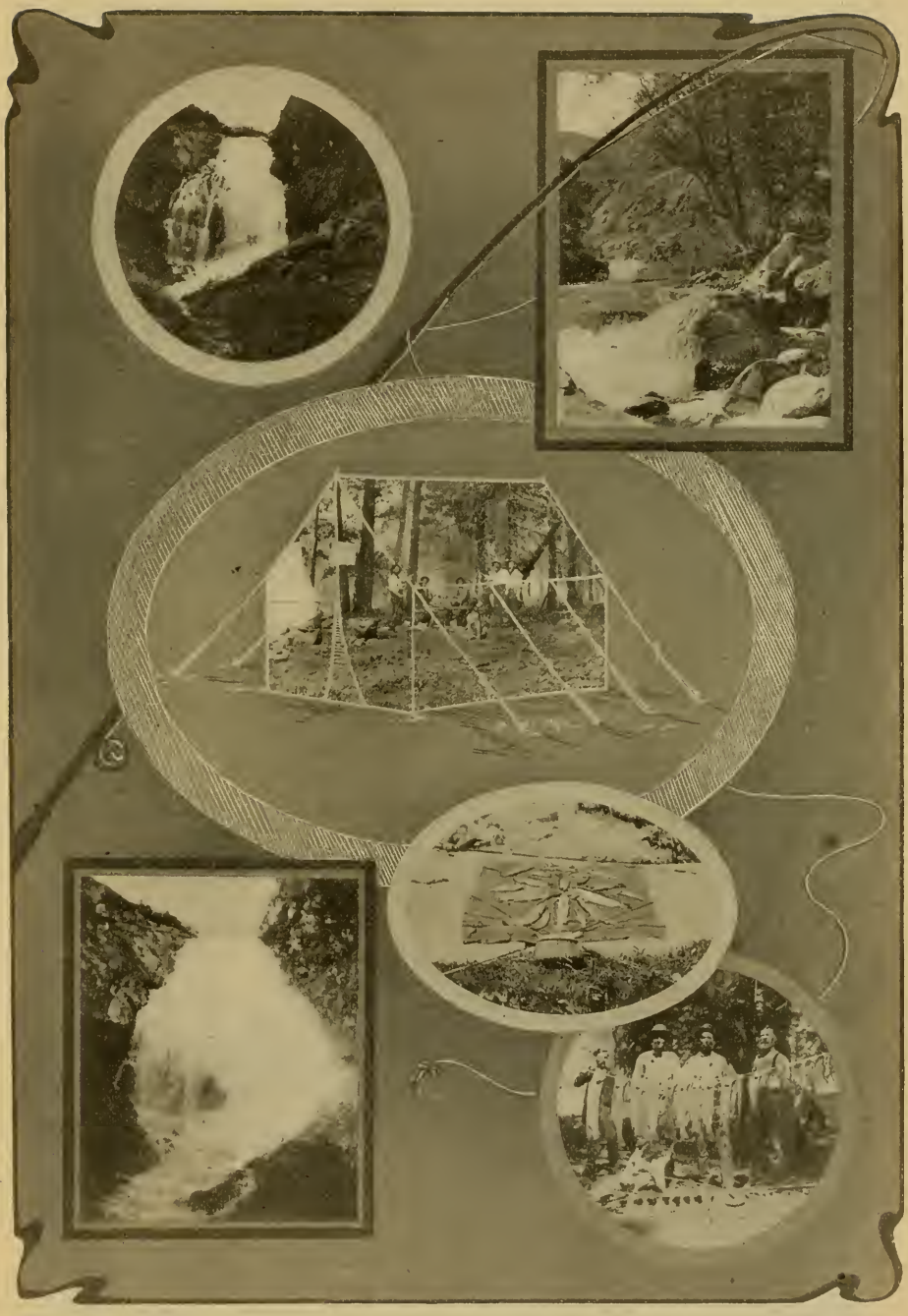
Reprinted from OUT WEST for December, 1902.

ever would buy at a dollar apiece. So rare a bargain will not be credited any more than it will be readily believed that one needs only tickle the ground with a stick in Tulare County and drop in any seed one wishes, and this twice or thrice a year, to secure as bountiful a crop as ever came out of the most carefully fertilized and diligently husbanded acreage back east.

To one who enters this rich country for the first time the impression is that here is great wealth waiting to be easily developed, for wherever it is possible to discover the vertical extent of the soil it is found to be of an almost incredible depth, as much as thirty feet and even more being not uncommon ; for here, as in all parts of the San Joaquin Valley, the arable land is made of a rich alluvial deposit, the accumulation of geologic ages of washings from the granite mountains. The surface of the country, until the foothills are reached, appears as level as a billiard table, though there is a dip to the west of about nine feet to the mile, and much of it looks like eastern pasture land on account of the frequency with which great spreading oaks are seen, with cattle and sheep grazing beneath them.

IN TULARE PASTURES. *Photo by Moore.*

To water this immense area, with its industries requiring such constant care, is a problem happily solved by the presence of six streams having their sources in the mountains and spreading in deltas so as to cover every acre of arable land in the county with the aid of the ditches of four irrigation districts, called the Alta, Tulare, Tule River and Poso. All of these are organized and operated under the State law, the annual assessments for maintenance being from 50 cents to $1 per acre, approximately. This pays the expense of the operation of flumes and provides a sinking fund for the payment of bonds. But these irrigation ditches are not the only sources of water supply. The waters of King's River, Sand Creek, Kaweah River, Tule River, Deer Creek and White River lie just beneath the surface of the ground, in apparently inexhaustible quantities, and wells of a depth of 100 feet invariably find a body of water which rises half way to the surface and usually refuses to be lowered by the most vigorous kind of pumping. Power for the operation of pumps is furnished by the Mt. Whitney Power Company, a corporation whose electric wires ramify the entire county, and which has reduced the cost of water nearly



SUGGESTIONS FOR SUMMERING IN TULARE COUNTY.

WHERE TULARE COUNTY'S IRRIGATING WATER COMES FROM
(Photo taken in July at an altitude of about 12,000 feet.)

fifty per cent below the figure which represents the cost under the steam engine pumping plant system formerly used.

It is not only for the consideration of fruits, but for habitation as well, that the matter of climate is important. It is important everywhere, but especially so in California, where climate is thought to be everything. Climate everywhere in the State is good and nowhere is it bad, so there is no need of comparisons, but the result of thirty years' observation in

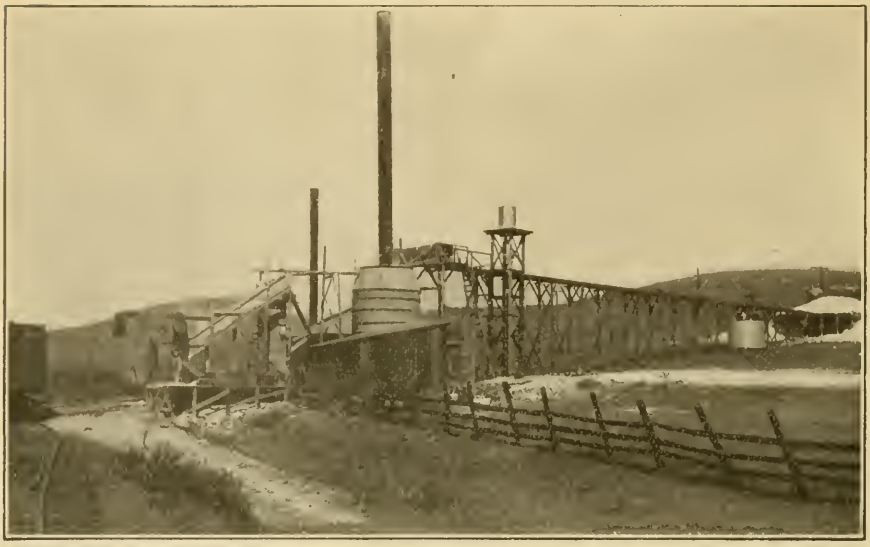
MUTTON AND WOOL AFOOT. *Photo by Moor*

Tulare County may be easily summed up. The climate there does not materially differ from the whole upper San Joaquin Valley. That it is tropical would be the natural supposition when it is known that oranges, lemons and figs are successfully grown, but it must not be supposed that thermal conditions producing such fruits are necessarily of a tropical nature. These citrus fruits are produced not only because of the thermal condition but also because of the soil and by the aid of artificial irrigation, yet of these three essentials the climate is the least tropical; it is not even semi-tropical. During what are termed the winter months — December, January and February — the mercury has never been known to go to 32 degrees or below and remain there as long as three hours after sunrise even in the shade. During these months the temperature will fall at times to the freezing point and below, but this always takes place between sunset and sunrise. In the summer there is some of what is termed hot weather, but not such

TULARE COUNTY PEACHES. *Photo by Robinson & Weishar.*
(3½ years from planting.)

hot weather as afflicts those east of the Rocky mountains. The heat is always dry, so that there are never any prostrations such as occur in the eastern states. Men engage in hard manual labor with the temperature as high as 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This, however, is an unusual heat. The average mean temperature for the summer months is about 75 degrees, and the average highest temperature about 95 degrees. There is almost an entire absence of humidity through the hot spells, so much so that it is not often that a trace of dew can be found on vegetation either at night or in the morning. This prevents the heat from becoming enervating, and there is always relief at night, for then comes a coolness. This never fails. In a properly ventilated building it is not possible to sleep through the night without covering, even when the day has sent the mercury up to 120 degrees.

The scenery of Tulare County is famous the world over. Kern River cañon and King's River cañon are two of the most picturesque localities known to the American traveler, and Mt. Whitney, 15,300 feet high, the highest mountain in the United States, excepting Alaska, is always an object of deep interest. To call the scenery of these gorges and cañons magnificent and sublime is to use only the current adjectives of travelers.



MAGNESITE WORKS AT PORTERVILLE. *Photo by A. R. Moore*

From the summit of Whitney one may look sheer down 11,000 feet to Lone Pine, the distance being so great that the outlines of trees may not be seen with the naked eye, but with a glass objects may be distinguished. Perhaps the greatest interest for travelers in this locality lies in the Giant Forest, which is situated 57 miles due east of Visalia, the county seat. In this forest there are upwards of 4,000 trees of over ten feet diameter at the

ROCKY POINT GRANITE QUARRY. (Near Exeter.)

base and which tower more than 300 feet into the air. The General Sherman in this forest is the largest tree in the world. At its base it measures 100 feet in circumference and five feet above the ground it is 84 feet 3 inches, a size which is maintained for 200 feet. Groups of six to a dozen trees 60 to 75 feet in circumference are frequently found. The tallest tree is 405 feet high, while one fallen monarch, 310 feet in length, reaches entirely across Crescent meadow. The altitude of the spot where the General Sherman stands is 7,100 feet, and the forest ranges from 6,500 to 7,400 feet in elevation. The government has built a fine road into the Giant Forest, and during the present year it was visited by about 1,500 tourists. Besides the "sequoia gigantea" there are superb specimens of sugar pine, silver fir. cedar, yellow pine and Douglass pine, all of which, taken together, constitute the most wonderful forest of great trees on this earth. In the streams around the base of Mt. Whitney, and in all the brooks of these

THE BLOSSOM OF ORANGE.

mountain fastnesses, are found in great abundance the famous golden trout, a game fish said to exist nowhere else — of a brilliant golden color and of a flashing wariness that is the delight of sportsmen.

The nitrates and potash of Tulare soil, aided by the warm, early spring and the summer nights not so cool as to check growth, together with a late fall, constitute the elements which produce the early maturity and phenomenal bearing of the deciduous fruit orchards of the county. The remarkable height which peach or prune trees may attain in a single season is illustrated by a picture which accompanies this article, and in the third year after planting, a good crop for market may be expected. The experimental era in fruit growing is passed in Tulare County. The fitness for particular fruits of the various localities has been amply demonstrated, and at the present time there is practically no chance for failure of profit to the intelligent and industrious fruit grower, while under propitious conditions incomes from average orchards fairly challenge the admiration of the stranger. A few illustrations of the fact from the crop of last year may not come amiss.

Ninety acres of peaches sold green for canning and shipping, $8,928.51; peaches dried, $619.31; total, $9,547.82; revenue per acre, $106.00.

A grower sold the fruit on his ten acres of peaches for $907.50, on the

READY TO PICK. (A Seedless Sultana Vineyard near Dinuba.)

trees ; another received $390 for the peaches on four acres, without the expense of gathering and marketing.

From a young 10-acre orchard green fruit to the amount of $324, and dried fruit $1,260.29 was sold ; a gross return of $158 per acre, and a net profit of nearly $100 per acre.

The prune industry shows returns fully as satisfactory. In the territory tributary to Visalia, there are 2,800 acres of bearing prunes from which there were shipped of cured fruit 14,200,000 pounds, an average of two and

A FAIR EXHIBIT FROM TULARE COUNTY.
(Over 100 varieties of grapes and almost as many of grain.)

After Picking. (17 tons to the acre was the yield.)

a half tons per acre. Sold at an average of $60 per ton this fruit brought the grower $150 per acre gross.. Deducting $15 per ton for picking and drying leaves $112.50 net income per acre. This is an average of the entire crop. Many individual orchards show a much larger profit.

The head office of the Alta Irrigation District is at Dinuba, a locality particularly well adapted to the culture of the raisin or wine grape, but suitable also for apricots, nectarines, prunes, pears, and all varieties of deciduous fruits as well as for alfalfa, grain, and vegetables of all kinds. As an indication of the extent of the raisin industry of this locality, the output of a single packing house for the present year, speaks with striking force, as follows : Muscatel raisins, 1164 tons ; seedless Sultana raisins, 180

A Car-Load of Tulare County Raisins.

PACKING ORANGES AT LINDSAY.

tons ; Thompson seedless raisins, 13 tons ; in sweat boxes ready for packing, 775 tons ; total, 2132 tons ; or, 213 10-ton carloads of raisins. This concern has also packed this year upwards of seventy cars of dried fruit, consisting of peaches, pears, apricots, plums and figs, and they have large crops of prunes yet to be delivered to the packing house. To enter one of these packing houses is to find a model of cleanliness and order, the help being, for the most part, young women, who look more like normal students than like factory girls. There are packing houses in all parts of the county, and they furnish attractive employment for young women during the packing season, which lasts over half the year, at a wage of from $1.50 to $2.00 per day.

The writer had the privilege of looking upon a patch of twelve and a half acres of Sultana grape vines from which the owner had sold this year $3,195.80 worth of raisins, and was told that the yield was not at all exceptional, the revenue from this patch in nine years being $20,303.47. From a fourteen-acre vineyard of Sultanas a neighbor has received, in two years, $6,000. The average was 25 tons per year, and the price six cents per pound. But the Sultana has no monoply of big profits in this locality. A 44-acre tract of muscats yielded its owner last year $5,350 in raisins, and grapes sold to the winery.

These illustrations might be carried out indefinitely. Such profits are

IN A LINDSAY ORCHARD.

not confined to one section of the county, nor to one industry. They are very general. There is no boom on. Prices are not inflated. Indeed as to some products — prunes, for instance — they are quite low. But Tulare County has come into its own. It has settled down into the business of fruit growing, while it is conscious of great resources in dairying and stock raising. Its possibilities are much diversified, and the particular adaptability of its various localities has been determined beyond a peradventure.

The Alta District contains about 130,000 acres, and virgin lands may be purchased in almost every part of it at prices ranging from $50 to $100 per acre. Nor is there any scarcity of water, which comes from Kings River in a volume, during the irrigating season, of from 10,000 to 30,000 cubic feet per second, a quantity sufficient to irrigate twice the amount of land within the boundaries of the district.

But it is in citrus fruits that the greatest distinction of Tulare County lies, though the industry is comparatively new. The crop of 1901 was about 1000 carloads, and the early ripening of the fruit is indicated by the

PEARS ON THE DRYING TRAYS AT DINUBA.

fact that the entire crop was harvested and shipped by December 20th. The citrus belt extends along the base of the foothills for a distance of about forty miles, and varies in width according to topographical and soil conditions. In this belt damaging frosts are said to be unknown, and owing to the influence of the warm, dry climate, the orchards are entirely free from scale, while no sign of smut has ever disfigured an orange grown in this belt.

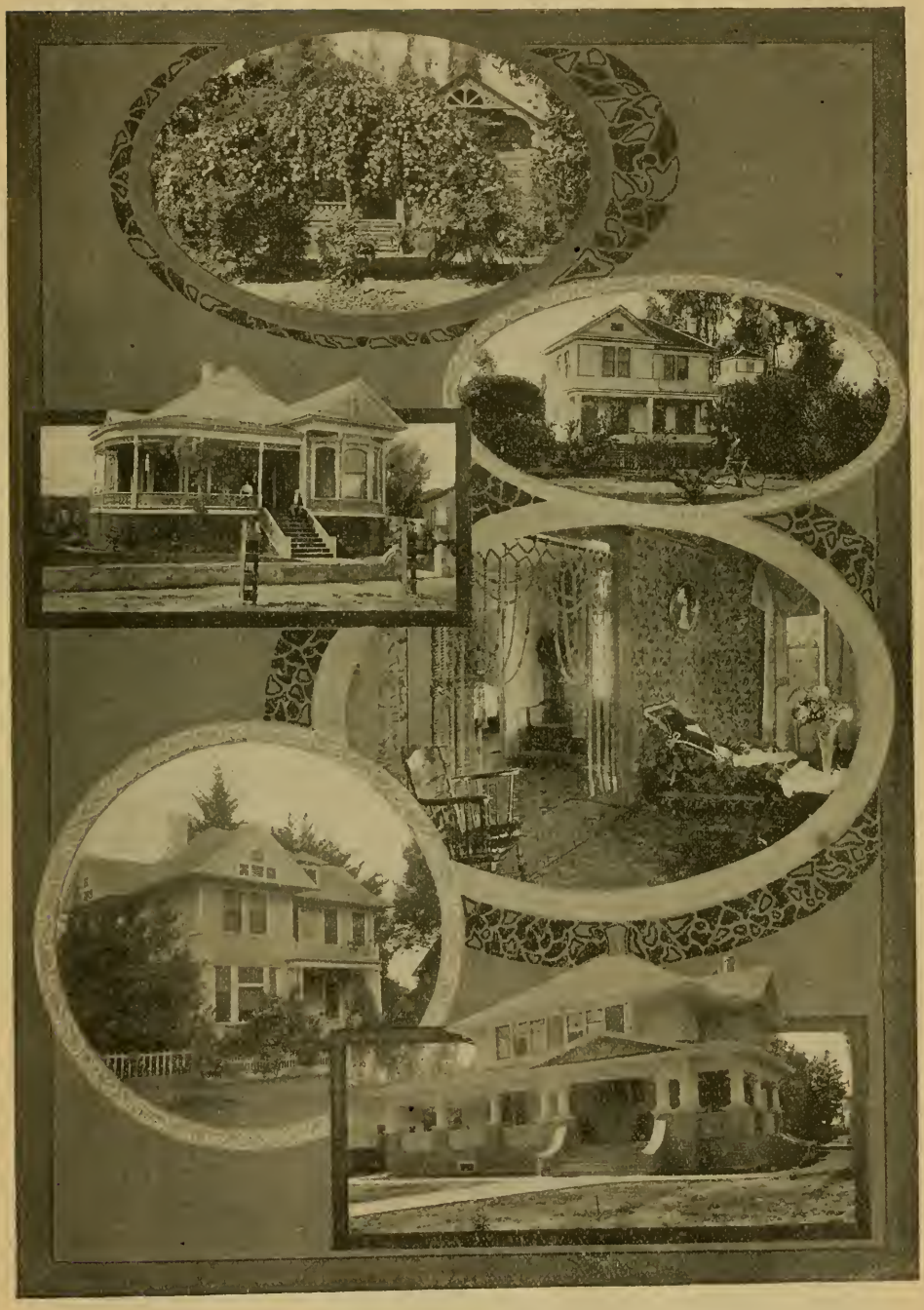
Exeter, Lindsay and Porterville are the leading centers of orange production, and at Lemon Cove there are extensive orchards of lemons. There were last year 5,455 acres of citrus fruit trees in the county, about 2,000 acres in bearing, and 750 acres were planted this year. Orange lands are in strong demand, but the territory suitable for orange culture is so extensive that the price of good lands has not up to the present time become excessive. One hundred dollars per acre buys the best of the lands with water rights, and trees may be expected to bear the fourth year after planting, if reasonable care has been taken in cultivation and irrigation. The fact that an orange grove five years old pays a large percentage of profit on a valuation of $1,000 per acre, indicates a vast increase of value in

AN ORANGE-GROWER'S HOME AT PORTERVILLE. *Photo by Moore.*

the $100-an-acre raw land during the five years of growing. In the large and thrifty stand of trees, in the size and flavor of the fruit, and in their heavy bearing, Tulare County orange orchards certainly present a marked incentive to the enthusiasm which her people manifest concerning the future of her citrus industry.

Stock raising was originally the principal industry of Tulare County. That gave way to general farming, and while fruit growing is now, since the adoption of irrigation, the leading occupation, a large share of atten-

A PORTERVILLE RESIDENCE STREET. *Photo by Moore.*



SOME TULARE COUNTY HOMES.

tion is given to dairying, which is very profitable. The soil is adapted to the production of alfalfa and other nutritious grasses, and the climate is so mild that cows and calves may run out twelve months in the year with-barns or sheds to protect them from the weather.

Tulare County is entirely without a public debt: all her public buildings and improvements are fully paid for, and the rate of taxation is very low. Labor finds profitable employment at all seasons of the year, and in the summer season it requires about 6,000 men, women and children to harvest the crop around Visalia alone.

That the population of Tulare County is increasing very rapidly is shown by the fact that the voting lists have about doubled since the last general election of four years ago, and the increase has been distributed quite evenly over the county. Visalia is the chief town and the county seat. It contains a population of 3,500. Its principal streets are paved with asphaltum and the

A TULARE HOME. *Photo by Doran.*

graded sidewalks of the greater part of the municipality are wide and clean, and in the residence portion lined with many varieties of shade trees. The city is situated on a branch of the Southern Pacific, and on the main line of the Santa Fé.

Tulare City is on the main line of the Southern Pacific in the southwestern part of the county. It is a thriving place of some 2,000 inhabitants. Its churches and schools are particularly fine, and a distinctive feature is a free public library housed in a handsome building of which the people are pardonably proud. That portion of the county known as "The Tulare Country," on account of its being directly tributary to Tulare city, is six townships long and three townships wide, and is adapted to the culture of grain, grapes, deciduous fruits, alfalfa and other grasses. Lands are cheap and may be had as low as $5 per acre, while choice farming lands with water rights sell for $50.

Dinuba is a stirring town of very thrifty growth in the northeast, in the midst of orchards of deciduous fruits and vineyards of raisin grapes, from which startling profits are made.

Exeter and Lindsay are distinguished for orange production, and both are rapidly growing towns on the railroad between Visalia and Porterville. The latter, having a population of 1,800, is the principal center of the

HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING AT TULARE. *Photo by Doran.*

citrus fruit industry of the county, though Lindsay equals it in production and shipments. In the vicinity of these three places there are lands suitable for citrus growth, at present uncultivated and for sale, in plenty. In characteristics they are alike, each being contiguous to the foothills and in the frostless belt.

GRADED SCHOOL AT DINUBA.

EARLY ORANGES FROM TULARE COUNTY.
(Photo taken at Lindsay, October 29, 1902. Fruit just commencing to color.)

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